

Message Text

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EA/PHL - MR. B. A. FLECK
----- 051451
P 252201Z JUN 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: LECHOCO TRIAL

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 2:30 EDT THAT LECHOCO JURY RETURNED VERDICT OF GUILTY IN PHASE II OF THE BIFURCATED LECHOCO TRIAL. IN THEIR VERDICT THE JURY REJECTED A STRONG DEFENSE CASE THAT LECHOCO WAS NOT GUILTY BY REASON OF INSANITY, WHICH CASE FEATURED THREE PYSCHIATRISTS AND THREE LAY WITNESSES (INCLUDING MRS. LETICIA LECHOCO AND NAPOLEON LECHOCO, JR.) THE JURY DELIBERATED FOR APPROXIMATELY EIGHT HOURS DURING WHICH TIME THEY REQUESTED TO SEE A NUMBER OF EXHIBITS AND TO HAVE REPLAYED FOR THEM THE TAPES CONTAINING LECHOCO'S CONVERSATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF NEGOTIATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S RELEASE. LECHOCO AND MRS. LECHOCO WHO WAS PRESENT IN THE COURTROOM FOR THE VERDICT DISPLAYED NO SIGNIFICANT EMOTION. UPON THE MOTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNSEL (MR. COLLINS) LECHOCO WAS PERMITTED TO REMAIN FREE ON BOND PENDING SENTENCING. THE GOVERNMENT REQUESTED AND THE JUDGE IMPOSED STRINGENT CONDITIONS OF THE BOND

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WHEREBY LECHOCO CAN UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES COMMUNICATE

WITH ANY MEMBER OF THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY, RELATIONS OR
FRIENDS OF MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF, OR ANYONE OTHER

THAN HIS ATTORNEY CONNECTED WITH THE CASE. THE JUDGE
STRONGLY ADMONISHED LECHOCO THAT ANY VIOLATION OF
THESE TERMS WOULD RESULT IN THE PROMPT ISSUANCE OF A
BENCH WARRANT FOR HIS IMMEDIATE INCARCERATION. THE
JUDGE ORDERED AN EXPEDITED PRE-SENTENCING REPORT AND
IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT A SENTENCING HEARING COULD BE
HELD AS EARLY AS THIRTY DAYS.

2. UPON CONVICTION THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
SERVICE CAN CONSIDER DEPORTATION ACTION AND THE DEPT
UNDERSTANDS THAT SUCH ACTION MAY IN FACT RESULT WITHIN
A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME FOLLOWING SENTENCING.
EMBASSY VIEWS ON POTENTIAL EFFECT OF DEPORTATION
TO THE PHILIPPINES WOULD BE HELPFUL AND DEPT WOULD
BE INTERESTED IN PHILIPPINE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE
VERDICT.

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